

Mayor's Commission on African American Elders

c/o Aging and Disability Services, Seattle-King County
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May 16, 2025 – 1:30–3:30pm

Seattle Municipal Tower

Joint meeting with Seattle/King County Aging and Disability Services Advisory Council

Members: Benjamin Abe, Tiffany Toms, Pamela Williams, Hiwot Zewdie, Charlotte Antoine, Claudette Thomas, Deborah O'Neill, Calvin Lassiter

Members Absent: Nathan Yemane, Paula Williams, Paul Mitchel,

ADS Staff: Michael Adusah, Eldad Mekuria, Mary Mitchell Pearson, Allison Boll, Andrea Yip, Maria Langlais, Waing Waing, Dinah Stephens

Guests: Alex O'Reilly, Lorna Stone, Joe Hailey, Dr. Joel Domingo, Traci Adair, Danielle Friedman, Delores Weims

1. Welcome/Introductions

- Pamela Williams, Mayor's Council on African American Elders (MCAAE) Chair, and Alex O'Reilly, Advisory Council (AC) Chair, welcomed members of both Councils.
- Pamela provided background of the Mayor's Council on African American Elders.
- Alex provided background of the Advisory Council and its advisory and advocacy roles for the Area Agency on Aging.
- Members celebrated Older Americans Month proclamation.
- Members celebrated the new AC Advocacy Committee Chair, Dr. Joel Domingo

2. Advocacy Updates

- Maria Langlais provided background information on the Advocacy Council Advocacy Committee and their role in providing advocacy updates in regular Advisory Council meetings. These meetings are open to the public. ADS staff summarized federal, state and local issues that the committee is tracking

3. Speed Networking:

- Members participated in a speed networking activity to learn more about each other personally and professionally
- Members lifted up the breadth of skills in the room including grant writing, organization, gardening, and technology.
- Issues that bring members to both councils include housing, homelessness, property tax, and education.
- Networks that members are involved in include senior centers, churches, p-patches, non-profits
- Members committed to continued relationship building.

4. Opportunities for Overlap:

Members had an opportunity to ask questions about each other's priorities and actions, and identify opportunities for collaboration

- Collaborate on Housing issues, including "opt out" provision for property tax exemption (automatic enrollment)
- Goal for organizing contact with Social Security Issues, and documenting issues with disruption and access barriers
- Collaborate on a letter thanking City Council for the Older American's Month Proclamation.
- Legislators and decision makers at all levels want stories. Organize small groups to help bring stories to amplify community needs.
- Collaborate on recruitment, including asking who is not in the room, sharing with people what the councils are doing and the vision of Seattle and King County as great places to grow up and grow old. Need to dig into how to deepen reach and representation in other parts of King County including rural East King County.
- Social isolation and loneliness. Not everyone has a "person." How to bring back neighborly connections.
- Engaging youth in older adult connections. Look at existing programs in the community and how to scale and spread.
- Homelessness Older adults are the fastest growing homeless population. How to focus on this population and examine its impact on programs and how services are delivered. Dementia and resources for families including GUIDE.
- "Be in each other's business" -Dr. Joel. Keep lines of communication open. Collaborate on a joint story bank - curated collection of stories that can be drawn from for advocacy for both councils.
- Exploring joint meetings for advocacy including joint legislative agendas and letters.

5. ADS Director's Update:

- Sound Generations luncheon invitation to Council members. Luncheon will take place Thursday May 29, 11-2PM. Members should let Eldad Mekruia and Michael Adusah know if they are interested in attending. Note that this could be a recruitment opportunity.
- Dr. Tiffany Johnson, Deputy Director, resigned and her last day at HSD/ADS is Friday, May 16.

Wrap Up and Next Steps:

Joint letter and photo thanking City Council for the Older American's Month Proclamation.

ADS staff to use Charlotte's LA City Hall photo in a future story

Next Meeting; Juneteenth Celebration Potluck – June 20th